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## ***SENATOR CARDIN APPLAUDS SENATE PASSAGE OF FOOD SAFETY BILL AS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF AMERICANS***

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator **Benjamin L. Cardin** (D-MD) today called Senate passage of the ***FDA Food Safety Modernization Act*** “an important step that needs to be taken to protect American families from serious illness or death caused by contaminated foods.” The House passed a similar bill in 2009.

*“We have all heard the news reports of E.Coli and salmonella in foods such as spinach, eggs, and peanut butter,” said Senator Cardin. “Unfortunately, food contamination has become common place. This bill will significantly upgrade our food safety laws by giving the government the tools it needs to verify food safety and to recall contaminated foods that threaten the health of American families.”*

***The FDA Food Safety Modernization Act***, S. 510, is a bipartisan bill that provides the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) with important tools to ensure that food producers implement appropriate preventive controls. It gives the FDA the authority to recall contaminated foods, to quickly determine the origin of those foods, and prevent them from being sold in our grocery stores. It also will require food importers to perform food safety verifications.

Senator Cardin also voted for a provision included in the bill that provides an exemption that would help small Maryland farmers who grow and sell their foods locally.

The FDA is charged with protecting the public by assuring the safety, effectiveness and security of our nation’s food supply, cosmetics, medicines, dietary supplements and hundreds of other products. The agency began its regulatory functions in 1906 and our nation’s food safety system has not been updated in nearly a century.

Food poisoning kills as many as 5,000 Americans every year. Food-borne illnesses sicken 76 million Americans annually and result in over 325,000 hospitalizations. Today, 170 countries export foods to the United States, yet we have seen a decrease in the number of 115 FDA inspectors in foreign countries since 2001.

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